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The Relationship of Parents' Work Stress and Child Functioning in the Context of Spillover Effects, Marital and Parenting Stress, and Parents' Perceptions

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The Relationship of Parents' Work Stress and Child Functioning in the Context of Spillover Effects, Marital and Parenting Stress, and Parents' Perceptions

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Honors in the Major Program in Psychology
in the College of Sciences
and in the Burnett Honors College
at the University of Central Florida
Orlando, Florida

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Abstract

Given that working is something parents cannot avoid in our society, understanding the ramifications that work stress can have is an important tool in today's society. This study sought to investigate the impact of parents' work stress on young children in the context of work-family spillover, parenting stress, marital stress, and perceptions of parenting. As part of this study, 106 working parents of children who ranged in age from 1- to 5-years rated their stress levels across multiple domains (i.e., work, marriage, and parenting), their perceived parenting behaviors, and their young child's emotional and behavioral functioning. Correlational results of this study supported the hypothesis that these variables would be related significantly to young children's emotional and behavioral functioning. Further, hierarchical regression analyses revealed that a single variable did not predict significantly young children's internalizing and externalizing behaviors but that a combination of work stress, work-family spillover, parenting stress, marital stress, and perceptions of parenting were important in accounting for variance. The results of this study emphasized the importance of studying the selected variables collectively so that employers can evaluate current workplace policies and resources to help minimize work stress and work-family spillover.

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Introduction

Previous research showed that stresses at work can spillover into different aspects of an individual's life in a negative fashion (Wierda-Boer, Gerri, & Vermulst, 2009). Such spillover can be understood in terms of Bronfenbrenner's socioecological model, which states that children's psychological development is influenced by characteristics of their parents and the greater society (such as the places in which parents work; Bronfenbrenner, 1986). Because the majority of parents who have young children also are working, studying and identifying how parents' work stress is related to young children's emotional and behavioral functioning is extremely important. Although previous research focused on the effects that work stress can have on an individual, there is less research on the problems that can arise in young children when parents experience a great amount of work stress. As a result, this study seeks to examine the relationships among parents' work stress and the behavior problems that their young children may experience, while considering factors such as spillover, marital stress, parenting stress, and perception of parenting.

Work Stress

Being employed is something very few individuals can avoid in today's society. This is particularly true for parents, who have to provide for themselves, their significant other, and their children as well. Although working can produce benefits, having a job also can promote the experience of stress. Work stress can be defined as having negative experiences at work, stressful interactions with co-workers and/or supervisors, level of work stressors, and feelings of job insecurity (Barling & Macewen, 1992; Repetti & Wood, 1997). There has been an overwhelming amount of research on how work stress affects an individual. For example, the different aspects

of work that have been known to cause stress (e.g., irregular shifts, excess hours, job insecurity) correlated positively with loss of overall concentration and depression (Campione, 2008; Gallavan & Newman, 2013).

Other studies also examined how work stress may affect parents. For example, Hibel, Mercado, and Trumbell (2012) measured the cortisol levels of parents in the mornings on both working days and non-working days. Their results showed that mothers had significantly higher levels of cortisol on working days when compared to non-working days. These results suggested that work stress may have a major effect on the overall stress levels of an individual (Hibel et al., 2012). Further, higher work stress also was related to negative parenting behaviors, withdrawal from partners, and less positive emotional interaction between parents and children (Gallavan & Newman, 2013; Repetti & Wood, 1997). Because work stress can have serious negative effects on an individual, there is no surprise that these effects can spill over into all aspects of an individual's life.

Spillover

When a certain stressor negatively affects an individual, those negative aspects will most likely spill over into other aspects of that individual's life. In particular, a parent may experience "spillover," which can be defined as times when attitudes or moods from one area of an individual's life are brought into another area. One common type of spillover is work to family spillover, when negative experiences or stressors from an individual's work are carried from the work place into an individual's home environment. This spillover causes roles to conflict and the individual to experience great stress (Wierda-Boer et al., 2009). The negative effects of spillover can be both emotional and physical, with individual's well being and life satisfaction being

decreased (Zhao, Qu, & Ghiselli, 2011). When a parent experiences negative stress from work, those negative side effects can spill over into many facets of the parent's life, such as their marriage, parenting ability, and parent-child relationship, while decreasing the parent's positive relationship with their family (Gallavan & Newman, 2013). Again, these assumptions are consistent with Bronfenbrenner's model (i.e., the exosystem). This model depicts how parents' environments can have an impact on children, even if children never come into direct contact with certain pieces of that environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). In addition to harming an individual, work to family spillover can be detrimental to an individual's relationship with their family and potentially create negative behaviors in their children.

Marital Stress

Negative work experiences can create personal strain and stress for an individual, which can spill over into marriage and directly affect marital functioning (Barling & Macewen, 1992). There are many ways that work stress is related directly to marital functioning. For example, if an individual comes home with stress from work, he or she may withdraw from their partner emotionally. They also may withdraw from domestic and childcare tasks, leaving their partner to pick up the burden (Wierda-Boer et al., 2009). Also, satisfaction in couples' relationships negatively correlated with work stress. The more satisfied women were with their partners, the happier they were with their domestic responsibilities (Moller, Hwang, & Wickberg, 2008), however, suggesting that marital functioning also can be significant for an individual's life and happiness. When work-to-marriage spillover negatively affects an individual's marriage, it also can affect that individual's child(ren). For example, greater marital quality was related to more positive parent-reported relationship quality with both daughters and sons (Holland & McElwain,

2013). With this relationship in mind, it may be the case that poor marital quality would be related to more negative parent-child relationship quality. Therefore, work stress can be related directly to marital functioning, which then can lead to adverse affects on the parent-child relationship.

Parental Stress

Being a parent can be stressful enough. Individuals living with children reported more stress and negative work spillover than those living without children (Andreassen, Hetland, & Pallesen, 2013). Therefore, added stress from work can spill over and be related to increased parental stress. All past research explicitly showed the importance of parenting as a major influence in a child's development, making work-to-parenting spillover a major concern. Because parents play such a crucial role in a child's life, any negative effect on an individual's ability to parent can affect negatively the parent-child relationship (Repetti & Wood, 1997). Higher parenting stress also may be related to an increase in family conflict for both men and women (Gallavan & Newman, 2013). For example, mothers who felt that they had negative experiences at work also showed a significant increase in negative parenting (Costigan, Cauce, & Cox, 2003). Further, parents who suffered from high levels of stress were more likely to develop some form of depression. Such symptoms can lead to a higher frequency of internalizing and externalizing behaviors in children (Downey & Coyne, 1990).

A study done by StGeorge and Fletcher (2011) showed that parents who worked were more concerned and stressed about their ability to pick up their children on time from childcare. Any time a parent was late due to work, it created an emotional burden on both the parent and the child (StGeorge & Fletcher, 2011). Further, the quality of mothers' work experiences

correlated positively with parenting quality, especially during early childhood, which is an important time in the solidification of parent-child attachment. Mothers who reported more stress or negative experiences at work at the time when their children were 9-months old showed a decrease in enjoyable interactions and sensitivity, and had an increase in negative interactions with their children when their children were 9- to 12-months of age (Costigan et al., 2003). As a result, understanding the indirect role that work stress can have on young children's emotional and behavioral functioning via parenting stress is important. Thus, examining the different types of stress that parents can experience is important.

Young Child Behavior Problems

Work stress can have a negative and profound effect on marital and parenting functioning, which can be related indirectly to the parent-child relationship. As already noted, work stress also was related directly to the parent-child relationship. The more hours parents worked and experienced work strain, the less frequent that parent-child activities occurred. Even when these parents did engage in parent-child activities, they were less emotional and involved; these characteristics led to lower quality parent-child relationships (Roeters, Lippe, & Kluwer, 2013). A study done by Repetti and Wood (1997) had mothers (via their own self-report) and independent observers describe parent-child interactions between mothers and their children during the work week. Both mothers and independent observers noted more emotional and behavioral withdraw during times that mothers reported greater workloads or interpersonal stress at work. In particular, the mothers were less caring and loving during play sessions, had less maternal speech toward their child, and paid less attention to them during these times (Repetti & Wood, 1997).

Research also showed that mothers' job satisfaction, which was related to level of stress, was correlated positively with daughters' self control and conduct problems. This research also showed that, when a mother's stress from work spilled over into family life, boys showed greater conduct problems, and girls showed increased immaturity. Further, fathers' job satisfaction was correlated positively with their sons' behavior (Barling & Van Bart, 1984). Given these findings, this study will examine what problems may arise in young children should work stress spill over into the parent-child relationship.

Parents' Perception of Parenting Behaviors

It is important to consider how parents perceive their own parenting ability and the relationship of these perceptions to young children's emotional and behavioral functioning. In addition, studying how different parenting practices can influence certain behavioral problems in the context of how individuals view their parenting practices is an important factor to add when looking at different dimensions that influence children's development (Elgar, Waschbusch, Dadds, & Sigvaldason, 2007). Also, parents' recall of their workday may be related to their current emotional reaction to their children (Repetti & Wood, 1997, p. 93). Because parents' perspectives can color subjective measures, researchers must take the type of measure and the individual completing it into consideration when conducting a study.

The Current Study

The current study investigated the relationships among work, marital, and parenting stress; parents' perceptions of their own parenting behavior; and young children's emotional and behavioral functioning. In addition, the current study sought to establish which of these variables has the greatest predictive value for young children's emotional and behavioral functioning. It

was hypothesized that work stress, spillover, parenting stress, and marital stress would be related positively to young children's emotional and behavioral problems. It also was predicted that the variables being examined in this study would predict significantly young children's emotional and behavioral problems, with work stress being a main predictor.

Method

Participants

Parents of 106 young children who ranged in age from 1- to 5-years completed a measure of children's emotional and behavioral functioning as well as other measures of interest. All participants were employed parents; both full-and part-time working parents were included. Of the children who were rated, 58 were males (54.7%), and 48 were females (45.3%). They had a mean age of 4.21-years ($SD=0.98$ years). The majority of these children had parents who were married (75.7%), whereas the other parents reported a different marital status (i.e., 9.3% were divorced, 5.6% were remarried, 3.7% were never married, 3.7% were separated, and 1.9% were widowed).

Of the parents who participated in this study, 69 were mothers, and 37 were fathers. Their ages ranged from 23- to 57-years ($M= 34.75$, $SD= 6.08$). The majority of these parents were Caucasian (76.4%), whereas the remaining parents reported different ethnicities (i.e., 7.5% were Hispanic, 6.4% were African American, 3.8% were Asian American, and 5.9% were from another ethnicity). The majority of the parents had attained a Bachelor's Degree (45.3%), whereas other parents varied in their educational backgrounds (i.e., 7.5% reported they had a high school diploma, 1.9% reported they had Vocational Training, 20.8% reported they had some college, 19.8% received Graduate Professional Training, and 4.7% received a Doctorate Degree. Parents reported working anywhere from 15 to 80 hours per week ($M=44.44$, $SD=11.98$). When asked about being employed outside of your home, 100 parents reported working outside of their home, whereas six responded that they work from home. The types of jobs reported ranged from CEO, firefighter, teacher, to administration. Thus, there was a wide

variety of occupations reported. In addition, 30 participants reported that they were currently the sole income provider for the household.

Materials

Work Stress

The *Occupational Stress Inventory-Revised* (OSI-R; Osipow, 1998) was used to measure parental work stress across multiple occupations and environments. It measures occupational stress, an individual's ability to effectively cope with stress caused by the work place and other settings, and resources available to help the individual cope effectively. The OSI-R is divided into three main subscales: the Occupational Role Questionnaire (ORQ), the Personal Strain Questionnaire (PSQ), and the Personal Resources Questionnaire (PRQ). The ORQ subscale is made up of six scales with ten items for each scale and measures occupational stress. These subscales are: Role Overload, Role Insufficiency, Role Ambiguity, Role Boundary, Responsibility, and Physical Environment. The PSQ has four subscales that measure psychological strain: Vocational Strain, Psychological Strain, Interpersonal Strain, and Physical Strain. The PQR also has four subscales and measures coping resources: Recreation, Self-Care, Social Support, and Rational/Cognitive Coping (Osipow, 1998).

Work-Family Spillover

In order to measure stress that spills over from a parent's work into their home life, participants were given the *Work-Family Interface Scale* (WFIS; Curbow, McDonnell, Spratt, Griffin, & Agnew, 2003). The WFIS is a 20-item questionnaire that is divided into five categories: general overload, conflict of family to work, spillover from family to work, spillover from work to family, and conflict from work to family. Participants are asked to score their

answers based on a 5-point scale based on how often an activity occurs. For example, one item is “Because of my work, I feel that I am letting my family down.” In a previous study, the overall scale was shown to be psychometrically strong in terms of internal reliability with a high alpha level of .90. For the current study, the overall scale was used.

Marital Stress

The *Marital Satisfaction Inventory-Revised* (MSI-R; Snyder, 1997) was used to measure marital stress. The self-report measure contains 150 true-false items and has been used with various kinds of couples (e.g., homosexual couples, cohabitating heterosexual couples). The MSI-R includes ten scales that assess relationship satisfaction in different areas of the relationship (i.e., problem solving, time together, affective communication, family history of distress, sexual dissatisfaction, dissatisfaction with children, conflict over childrearing, disagreement over finances, aggression, and role orientation), two validity scales (i.e., conventionalization and inconsistency), and one global scale (i.e., global distress).

Parenting Stress

The *Parenting Stress Inventory-Short Form* (PSI; Abidin, 1995) contains 36 items and was used to measure parental stress and identify parent-child problem areas. The measure yields scores for three subscales: Parental Distress ($\alpha = .87$), Parent-Child Dysfunctional Interaction ($\alpha = .80$), and Difficult Child ($\alpha = .85$). Parents answered questions such as “Since having this child, I have been unable to do new and different things” and “I feel that my child is very moody and easily upset” on a scale that ranges from *Strongly Agree* to *Strongly Disagree*. The total stress scale score was used in this study. In a previous study, it had a Cronbach’s alpha of .91.

Parenting Behaviors

The *Alabama Parenting Questionnaire* (APQ; Shelton, Frick, & Wootton, 1996) was used to assess parents' perception of their parenting ability as relevant to child externalizing problems. The APQ contains 42 questions, such as "You reward or give something extra to your child for obeying you and behaving well." These self-reported responses are rated on a 5-point Likert scale of how often the parent feels that these things occur.

Young Children's Emotional and Behavioral Functioning

The *Child Behavior Checklist* (Achenbach & Rescorla, 2000) was chosen to measure children's emotional and behavioral functioning based on self-report answers from a parent. The measure contains 100 items describing children's behavior, such as "Rapid shifts between sadness and excitement." Parents rate these items using a Likert scale. Raw scores were converted to T scores. In a previous study, the Internalizing Problems Scale had a Cronbach's alpha of .89 and the Externalizing Problems Scale had a high Cronbach's alpha of .92. In this study, the Internalizing Problems and Externalizing Problems scales also were used.

Demographics

A *demographics* questionnaire also was given to all participants. This questionnaire was used to gather information about each participant and their child's other parent.

Procedure

Parents were recruited through various online parenting forums and social media outlets (e.g. Facebook). All questionnaires used in this study were completed online by participants through a survey website (i.e., Survey Gizmo). Included in every survey was an Explanation of

Research form. This form gave participants a description of the research being conducted, reassured participants of their anonymity, and reminded them that their participation was voluntary. In addition, this form provided contact information for the investigators in case the participant had any questions. After completing the survey, parents were provided with a post-participation information form. This form summarized the purpose of this research study and provided relevant references of interest. Data were analyzed in group format to ensure that every response remained anonymous. There were no foreseen risks or costs for participation in this study.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

With regard to work stress, measured by the Occupational Stress Inventory-Revised, parents reported low levels of occupational stress ($M= 133.36$, $SD= 28.39$; as scores were able to range from 60 to 300) and psychological stress ($M= 81.54$, $SD= 23.88$; as scores were able to range from 40 to 200) but moderate levels of coping resources ($M= 124.50$, $SD= 23.70$; as scores were able to range from 40 to 200). On average, parents also reported moderate levels of spillover ($M= 48.58$, $SD= 10.86$; as scores were able to range from 20 to 100).

With regard to marital stress, parents reported moderate levels for problem solving and communication ($M= 7.81$, $SD= 4.94$; as scores were able to range from 0 to 19), time together ($M= 4.98$, $SD= 3.07$; as scores were able to range from 0 to 10), affective communication ($M= 4.65$, $SD= 3.89$; as scores were able to range from 0 to 13), family history of distress ($M= 3.10$, $SD= 3.17$; as scores were able to range from 0 to 9), sexual dissatisfaction ($M= 5.59$, $SD= 3.69$ as scores were able to range from 0 to 13), dissatisfaction with children ($M= 3.19$, $SD= 2.21$; as scores were able to range from 0 to 11), conflict over child rearing ($M= 3.05$, $SD= 3.23$; as scores were able to range from 0 to 10), disagreement about finances ($M= 3.59$, $SD= 3.63$; as scores were able to range from 0 to 11), conventionalization ($M= 4.08$, $SD= 3.41$), and role orientation ($M= 8.58$, $SD= 3.29$; as scores were able to range from 0 to 12). Parents reported low levels of global distress ($M= 6.59$, $SD= 7.90$ as scores were able to range from 0 to 22) and aggression ($M= 2.08$, $SD= 2.65$; as scores were able to range from 0 to 10).

Parents reported low levels of parenting stress ($M= 79.67$, $SD= 26.98$; as scores were able to range from 36 to 180). Parents reported high levels of positive parenting ($M= 24.74$, $SD= 3.03$, as scores were able to range from 6 to 30) and parent involvement ($M= 32.74$, $SD= 6.21$; as scores were able to range from 9 to 45), while reporting low levels of poor monitoring or supervision ($M= 6.89$, $SD= 2.79$; as scores were able to range from 6 to 30), inconsistent discipline ($M= 8.64$, $SD= 2.20$; as scores were able to range from 4 to 20), and corporal punishment ($M= 3.48$, $SD= 1.02$; as scores were able to range from 3 to 15).

On average, parents reported nonclinical levels of internalizing problems ($M= 49.49$, $SD= 13.06$) and externalizing problems ($M= 45.63$, $SD= 11.67$) for their young children, as each of these average scores fell within the Nonclinical range (as indicated by the developer of the CBCL).

Correlation Analyses

Correlational analyses examined the relationships among work stress, work to family spillover, marital stress, parenting stress, parents' perception of their parenting abilities, and young children's emotional and behavioral functioning. Refer to Table 1 for these correlations.

With regard to the relationship among the work stress variables and young children's problems, occupational stress was related significantly and positively to young children's internalizing problems ($r= .31$, $p< .001$) and externalizing problems ($r= .33$, $p<.001$).

Psychological stress was related significantly and positively to young children's internalizing problems ($r= -.34$, $p< .001$) and externalizing problems ($r= .34$, $p<.001$). In addition, parents' coping resources were related significantly and negatively to young children's internalizing problems ($r= -.31$, $p< .001$) and externalizing problems ($r= -.30$, $p<.002$). Also, work to family

spillover was related significantly and positively to young children's internalizing problems ($r = .41, p < .001$) and externalizing problems ($r = .47, p < .001$). Thus, high levels of work stress and spillover as well as low levels of coping resources were related to behavior problems in young children.

In terms of marital stress, problem solving was related positively and significantly to young children's internalizing problems ($r = .32, p < .001$) and externalizing problems ($r = .29, p < .003$). Time together was related negatively and significantly to young children's internalizing problems ($r = -.33, p < .001$) and externalizing problems ($r = .27, p < .005$). In addition, affective communication was related positively and significantly to young children's internalizing problems ($r = .36, p < .001$) and externalizing problems ($r = .28, p < .003$). Disagreements about finances also were related positively and significantly to young children's internalizing problems ($r = .34, p < .001$) and externalizing problems ($r = .30, p < .002$). In addition, aggression was related positively and significantly to young children's internalizing problems ($r = .36, p < .001$) and externalizing problems ($r = .33, p < .001$). Dissatisfaction with children and conflict over child rearing were both related positively and significantly to young children's internalizing problems ($r = .47, p < .001$, and $r = .46, p < .001$, respectively) and externalizing problems ($r = .56, p < .001$, and $r = .38, p < .001$, respectively). Additionally, conventionalization was related negatively and significantly to young children's internalizing problems ($r = -.25, p < .02$) and externalizing problems ($r = -.23, p < .02$). Finally, the global distress scale was related positively and significantly to young children's internalizing problems ($r = .31, p < .001$) and externalizing problems ($r = .28, p < .003$). Thus, variables depicting characteristics of higher marital stress were related to increased levels of behavior problems in young children.

With regard to parenting stress and young children's functioning, parenting stress was related positively and significantly to young children's internalizing problems ($r=.68, p<.01$) and externalizing problems ($r=.70, p<.01$). In terms of parents' perception of their parenting behaviors, positive parenting was related negatively and significantly to young children's internalizing problems ($r= -.35, p<.001$) and externalizing problems ($r= -.51, p<.001$). In addition, punishment was related positively and significantly to young children's internalizing problems ($r= .33, p<.001$) and externalizing problems ($r=.36, p<.001$). Further, inconsistent parenting was related positively and significantly to young children's internalizing problems ($r=.23, p<.02$) and externalizing problems ($r=.24, p<.01$). Finally, parent involvement was related negatively and significantly to young children's internalizing problems ($r= -.35, p<.001$) and externalizing problems ($r= -.47, p<.001$). Given this pattern of correlations, parenting behaviors are related closely to young children's behavior problems.

Regression Analyses

Two regression analyses were conducted in order to examine the combination of work stress, spillover stress, marital stress, parenting stress, and parents' perception of their parenting ability in predicting internalizing and externalizing problems in young children. Only variables previously shown to be correlated significantly with young children's emotional and behavioral functioning were examined.

In the hierarchical regression analyses, work stress variables (i.e., occupational stress, psychological strain, and coping resources) and spillover were added in Block 1. Marital stress variables (i.e., problem solving, time together, affective communication, global distress, dissatisfaction with children, conflict over child rearing, disagreement about finances,

conventionalization, and aggression) were added in Block 2, followed by total parenting stress and parenting behaviors (i.e., positive parenting, parent involvement, corporal punishment, and inconsistent parenting) in Block 3. The first regression sequence was performed to identify significant predictors for young children's internalizing problems, and the second regression sequence was performed to identify significant predictors for young children's externalizing problems. See Tables 2 and 3.

Analysis 1: Works Stress, Spillover, Marital Stress, Parenting Stress, Perception of Parenting as Predictors of Young Children's Internalizing Problems

In Block 1, the combination of work stress variables and spillover stress resulted in a significant regression equation, $F(4,105) = 6.07, p < .001, r^2 = .19$. A further examination showed that spillover was a significant predictor ($p < .004$), showing that high stress levels from work to family spillover was related to higher levels of internalizing behavior problems. Next, marital stress variables were added in Block 2 and contributed to a significant regression equation, $F(13,105) = 3.82, p < .001, r^2 = .35$. In this block, dissatisfaction over children proved to be a significant predictor ($p < .05$). Finally, when parenting stress and perceived parenting behaviors were added in Block 3, the regression equation remained significant, $F(17,105) = 38.87, p < .001, r^2 = .88$. In this last block, conflict over child rearing ($p < .008$) and positive parenting ($p < .001$) were significant predictors.

Analysis 2: Works Stress, Spillover, Marital Stress, Parenting Stress, Perception of Parenting as Predictors of Young Children's Externalizing Problems

In Block 1, the entry of work stress resulted in a significant regression equation, $F(4,105) = 7.77, p < .001, r^2 = .24$, for externalizing problems. Consistent with the first regression, work to family spillover proved to be a significant individual predictor ($p < .001$). In Block 2, the

addition of marital stress variables resulted in a significant regression equation, $F(13,105) = 4.77, p < .01, r^2 = .40$. In this block, spillover stress decreased but remained significant ($p < .04$), and disagreement about finances became a significant predictor. As in the first regression, dissatisfaction over children also was a significant predictor ($p < .001$). Finally, the regression equation remained significant in Block 3, $F(17,105) = 29.70, p < .001, r^2 = .85$. In particular, positive parenting was shown to be a significant predictor in the equation ($p < .001$).

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationships among parents' work stress, other stressors that parents experience, and young children's emotional and behavioral functioning. Given previous findings that parents' work stress is related to individuals' functioning as well as family and child interactions (Repetti & Wood, 1997), this study sought to investigate gaps in the literature and examine how work stress is related specifically to young children's emotional and behavioral functioning. It was hypothesized that work stress, spillover, marital stress, and parenting stress would be related positively to problems in young children's emotional and behavioral functioning. It also was hypothesized that all the variables in this study would predict significantly young children's internalizing and externalizing problems, with work stress being a main predictor.

With regard to the relationships among the work stress variables and young children's emotional and behavioral functioning, the results showed significant and positive relationships for occupational stress and psychological strain to both internalizing and externalizing problems, whereas coping resources showed a significant and negative relationship to internalizing and externalizing problems. These results indicated that higher levels of parents' occupational stress and psychological strain were related to higher levels of internalizing and externalizing problems in their young children. These results were consistent with those of previous research, where work stress was associated with increased work-to-family conflict and where the quality of parents' work experiences were related to the quality of their parenting and their relationship with their child (Gallavan & Newman, 2013; Roeters et al., 2013).

In addition, these results suggested that parents who have highly developed coping resources were reporting fewer internalizing and externalizing problems in their young children. These results were consistent with past research, where the development of coping resources moderated an individuals' perceived levels of work stress and was related positively to optimistic affectivity (Fogarty et al., 1999). Although coping resources can affect individual functioning, a study by Levy-Shiff, Dimitrovsky, Shulman, and Har-Even (1998) also suggested that coping resources were predictive of maternal adjustment to parenting and were associated significantly with characteristics of the parent-child relationship (Levy-Shiff et al., 1998). When work stress variables were included in the hierarchical regression analyses, they accounted for a significant amount of the variance in predicting young children's internalizing and externalizing problems.

With regard to work to family spillover stress, previous research showed repeatedly the detrimental emotional and physical effects that negative work to family spillover can have (e.g., depression), the negative impact on individuals' ability to attend to personal and family needs, and the significant decrease in positive parent-child interactions (Gallavan & Newman, 2013; Goodman & Crouter, 2009). Consistently, the findings of the present study indicated that spillover had significant relationships to both internalizing and externalizing problems in young children, both in correlational and regression analyses. These findings suggested that, in agreement with previous research, work stress was related negatively to multiple aspects of individuals' lives. This finding should be an alert to employers that stressful working environments and inadequate coping resources may be related to adverse effects in their employees' lives. In addition, the significant relationship of spillover to internalizing and externalizing problems in young children suggested that addressing parents' work stress and

reducing work-family spillover could be related to a reduction in young children's emotional and behavioral problems.

With regard to marital stress and its relationship to young children's emotional and behavioral functioning, results showed that there were significant relationships for nine of the twelve marital stress subscales and both internalizing and externalizing problems in young children. As in previous research, problem solving (i.e., ineffectiveness in resolving differences), time together (i.e., lack of shared leisure time and interests), affective communication (i.e., lack of support and dissatisfaction with the amount of affection expressed), disagreement about finances (i.e., discord regarding management of finances), and global distress (i.e., overall dissatisfaction with relationship) all showed significant and positive relationships to both internalizing problems and externalizing problems in young children. These results indicated that discord within the marital relationship and higher levels of marital stress may play an important role in higher levels of both internalizing and externalizing problems for young children. These results were consistent with previous research that marital quality was related directly to the quality of the parent-child relationship (Moller et al., 2008).

As expected, parents' ratings of the marital stress subscales that describe the parent-child relationship, dissatisfaction with children (i.e., relationship quality between respondents and their children), and conflict over child rearing (i.e., the degree of conflict between partners regarding child rearing practices) were related positively and significantly to ratings of young children's internalizing and externalizing problems. In addition, the hierarchical regression analysis that contained work stress, spillover, and marital stress variables, conflict over child rearing proved to be a significant predictor of young children's internalizing problems after all these other

variables were entered. These findings were consistent with previous research that showed how marital disputes and stress over children and child rearing practices were related directly to children's problems (Mahoney, Jouriles, & Scavone, 1997). The conventionalization scale, which is a validity scale that assesses individuals' tendency to distort the assessment of their relationship in a socially desirable direction related negatively and significantly to young children's internalizing and externalizing problems.

The present study indicated that total parenting stress was correlated significantly with young children's emotional and behavioral functioning as well. This finding was consistent with those of previous studies revealing that parents were less loving and withdraw from their children when they were stressed. This process can lead to detrimental effects in children (Costigan et al., 2003; Deater-Deckard, 2004). Contrary to previous research, however, parenting stress was not a significant predictor of either internalizing problems or externalizing problems at any level of the hierarchical regression analyses. It may be that parenting stress does not account for unique variance once other variables are considered.

Consistently, parenting behaviors were related significantly to young children's emotional and behavioral functioning. Consistent with previous research, the results of this study revealed that corporal punishment and inconsistent parenting were related positively and significantly to both internalizing and externalizing problems in young children, whereas parent involvement was related negatively and significantly with these problems in young children. Positive parenting related negatively and significantly to both internalizing and externalizing problems, a finding that was consistent with previous research showing positive parenting as negatively associated with the existence of any disruptive disorder (Escribano, Aniorte, &

Orgilés, 2013). In addition, results showed that positive parenting was a predictor variable for parents' ratings of their young children's internalizing and externalizing problems after all other variables were entered into regression equations.

Limitations of the Study

The results of this study should be examined within the context of its limitations. First, due to the time frame and resources for this study, a sample of convenience was used. Such a sample did not allow for a true representation of the entire population. In addition, although the correlations used in the study showed significant relationships, causation cannot be inferred. Second, due to the sample size, men and women were included in the analyses together. Therefore, it is important to take into account that men and women have different gender roles and ways of responding to questions. Future research should analyze men and women's responses separately to see if sex and gender roles are important variables that could affect the results.

Another limitation is the length of the survey in conjunction with the population being studied. The target population for this study was working parents with young children. If a parent is very stressed at work and has responsibilities at home, however, they may not have an hour of extra time to fill out a survey. This factor could account for many of the responses scoring low on the different stress scales; parents who have less stress in their life may be more inclined and/or have time to fill out a survey. In addition, such characteristics could skew this sample to participants who have white collar jobs and the time to complete the survey. Finally, it must be taken into consideration that one parent completed all measures, rating his or her own characteristics as well as those of his or her young child. As a result, future research should

incorporate multiple methods of data collection or use measures filled out by multiple informants in the young child's life. Although not all variables individually predicted young children's internalizing and externalizing problems, when examined collectively, these variables proved to significantly predict children's internalizing and externalizing problems. Overall, this study suggested that all variables were intertwined and should be considered collectively when looking at a young child's emotional and behavioral functioning.

Closing Summary

In spite of these limitations, this study has added to the literature surrounding work stress and its relationship to young children's emotional and behavioral functioning. The results of this study signify the importance of examining these variables (i.e., work stress, work-family spillover, marital stress, parenting stress, and perception of parenting) collectively when trying to determine the factor(s) that affect young children's behavioral problems. The information obtained in this study will allow employers to consider their current policies and resources for employees with young children. Not only can work stress be related to poor functioning for individuals and their children, but work stress also was shown to decrease productivity in the workplace (Oloyede, 2006). Employers should be motivated to help reduce work stress in benefit of individuals and their families and for their companies as well. Future research should try and alleviate parental work stress in order in an effort to foster better outcomes for workers who are parents and for their young children. In addition, future research should examine if reducing parental work stress can remediate the effects of spillover, marital stress, parenting stress, and perceptions of parenting.

Table 1. Correlations Among Variables

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
1. Occupational Stress	-	.75 ***	-.71 ***	.59 ***	.35 ***	.47 ***	.39 ***	.14	.13	.32 ***	.54 ***	.39 ***	.26 **	-.28 **	.23 *	-.20 *	.51 ***	.37 ***	-.41 ***	.44 ***	.04	.32 ***	.31 ***	.37 ***
2. Psychological Strain		-	-.76 ***	.57 ***	.48 ***	.61 ***	.50 ***	.18	.22 *	.49 ***	.52 ***	.46 ***	.40 ***	-.41 ***	.33 ***	-.06	.61 ***	.38 ***	-.33 ***	.38 ***	-.01	.37 ***	.34 ***	.31 ***
3. Coping Resources			-	-.40 ***	-.53 ***	-.53 ***	-.52 ***	-.26 **	-.20 *	-.52 ***	-.48 ***	-.48 ***	-.40 ***	.52 ***	-.38 ***	.04	-.58 ***	-.36 ***	.30 **	-.40 ***	-.12	-.47 ***	-.31 ***	-.30 **
4. Work-Family Spillover				-	.40 ***	.54 ***	.36 ***	.10	.33 ***	.36 ***	.69 ***	.42 ***	.16	-.27 **	.25 *	-.35 ***	.55 ***	.45 ***	-.54 ***	.41 ***	-.20 *	.15	.41 ***	.47 ***
5. Problem Solving					-	.68 ***	.83 ***	.14	.51 ***	.85 ***	.40 ***	.68 ***	.63 ***	-.83 ***	.62 ***	-.15	.49 ***	.31 ***	-.29 *	.26 **	-.08	.08	.32 ***	.29 **
6. Time Together						-	.72 ***	.03	.42 ***	.71 ***	.51 ***	.58 ***	.47 ***	-.63 ***	.48 ***	-.12	.49 ***	-.30 **	.23 **	.23 *	.10	.16	.33 ***	.27 **
7. Affective Communication							-	.15	.45 ***	.89 ***	.36 ***	.73 ***	.65 ***	-.80 ***	.84 ***	-.01	.51 ***	.34 ***	-.26 **	.25 **	.05	.16	.36 ***	.28 **
8. Family History								-	-.05	.15	.08	.13	.15	-.18	.06	.10	.13	.06	-.06	.05	.09	.10	.07	-.03
9. Sexual Dissatisfaction									-	.45 ***	.20 *	.31 ***	.27 **	-.52 ***	.29 **	-.38 ***	.14	.12	-.25 **	.18	-.01	.03	.08	.19
10. Global Distress										-	.40 ***	.76 ***	.65 ***	-.84 ***	.70 ***	-.07	.46 ***	.31 ***	-.21 *	.23 *	.02	.11	.31 ***	.28 **
11. Difficulties with Children											-	.53 ***	.22 *	-.30 **	.32 ***	-.21 *	.67 ***	.54 ***	-.47 ***	.29 **	-.06	.23 *	.47 ***	.56 ***
12. Conflict over Child Rearing												-	.60 ***	-.66 ***	.67 ***	.01	.58 ***	.42 ***	-.23 *	.30 **	.01	.13	.46 ***	.38 ***
13. Disagreement about Finances													-	-.63 ***	.58 ***	.14	.41 ***	.34 ***	-.13	.12	.10	.17	.34 ***	.30 **
14. Conventionalization														-	-.59 ***	-.04	-.43 ***	-.24 *	.10	-.25 *	-.00	-.08	-.25 *	-.23 *
15. Aggression															-	-.06	.37 ***	.37 ***	-.11	.22 *	.01	.21 *	.36 ***	.33 ***
16. Role Orientation																-	-.05	-.05	.56 ***	-.16	.05	-.12	-.02	-.07
17. Total Parenting Stress																	-	.72 ***	-.47 ***	.33 ***	-.08	.33 ***	.68 ***	.70 ***

Table 1 Continues

18. Positive Parenting																		-	-.41 ***	.25 **	.02	.41 ***	-.35 ***	-.51 ***
19. Parent Involvement																			-	-.24 *	.18	-.28 **	-.35 ***	-.46 ***
20. Inconsistent Discipline																				-	.15	.30 **	.23 *	.24 *
21. Poor Monitoring																					-	.22 *	.07	-.12
22. Punishment																						-	.33 ***	.36 ***
23. Internalizing Problems																							-	.74 ***
24. Externalizing Problems																								-

Table 2. Hierarchical Regression of Combination of all Variables for Internalizing Problems

Variables	<i>B</i>	β	<i>t</i>
Block 1. $F(4,105) = 6.07, p < .001, r^2 = .19$			
Occupational Stress	-.02	-.04	-.23
Psychological Strain	.03	.06	.36
Coping Resources	-.08	-.15	-1.0
Work-Family Spillover	.41	.34	2.9**
Block 2. $F(13,105) = 3.82, p < .001, r^2 = .35, \Delta r^2 = .16$			
Occupational Stress	-.04	.07	-.62
Psychological Strain	.01	.01	.05
Coping Resources	-.04	-.07	-.42
Work-Family Spillover	.23	.19	1.39
Problem Solving	-.15	-.06	-.30
Time Together	-.13	-.03	-.21
Affective Communication	.94	.28	1.34
Global Distress	-.60	-.36	-1.53
Dissatisfaction Over Children	1.54	.26	1.97 *
Conflict Over Child Rearing	.89	.22	1.42
Disagreement about Finances	.75	.21	1.67
Conventionalization	.37	.10	.53
Aggression	.66	.13	1.06
Block 3. $F(17,105) = 38.87, p < .001, r^2 = .88, \Delta r^2 = .53$			
Occupational Stress	-.03	-.03	-.44
Psychological Strain	.01	.01	.15
Coping Resources	.011	.02	.26
Work-Family Spillover	.01	.01	.08
Problem Solving	.13	.05	.58
Time Together	.20	.05	.74
Affective Communication	.22	.06	.68
Global Distress	-.22	-.13	-1.24
Dissatisfaction Over Children	-.63	-.11	-1.67
Conflict Over Child Rearing	.76	.19	2.73 **
Disagreement about Finances	-.10	-.03	-.49
Conventionalization	.11	.03	.36
Aggression	-.20	-.04	-.70
Total Parent Stress	.01	.02	.83
Positive Parenting	.99	.95	15.88 ***
Parent Involvement	.06	.03	.56
Punishment	-.50	-.04	-.81

Note. * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

Table 3: Hierarchical Regression of Combination of all Variables for Externalizing Problems

Variables	<i>B</i>	β	<i>t</i>
Block 1. $F(4,105) = 7.77, p < .001, r^2 = .24$			
Occupational Stress	.001	.002	.021
Psychological Strain	-.039	-.079	-.499
Coping Resources	-.093	-.189	-1.311
Work-Family Spillover	.466	.434	3.857 ***
Block 2. $F(13,105) = 4.77, p < .01, r^2 = .40, \Delta r^2 = .16$			
Occupational Stress	-.02	-.04	-.29
Psychological Strain	-.04	-.08	-.53
Coping Resources	-.04	-.08	-.50
Work-Family Spillover	.30	.28	2.10 *
Problem Solving	-.29	-.12	-.65
Time Together	-.71	-.19	-1.25
Affective Communication	.44	.15	.74
Global Distress	-.24	-.16	-.70
Dissatisfaction Over Children	2.44	.46	3.62 ***
Conflict Over Child Rearing	-.24	-.07	-.45
Disagreement about Finances	.82	.26	2.15 *
Conventionalization	-1.55	-.05	-.26
Aggression	.70	.18	1.48
Block 3. $F(17,105) = 29.70, p < .001, r^2 = .85, \Delta r^2 = .45$			
Occupational Stress	.01	.024	.31
Psychological Strain	-.04	-.09	-.11
Coping Resources	.03	.06	.72
Work-Family Spillover	.07	.06	.86
Problem Solving	-.05	-.02	-.24
Time Together	-.39	-.10	-1.42
Affective Communication	-.36	-.12	-1.14
Global Distress	.11	.08	.63
Dissatisfaction Over Children	.43	.08	1.14
Conflict Over Child Rearing	-.32	-.09	-1.13
Disagreement about Finances	.10	.03	.50
Conventionalization	-.46	-.14	-1.50
Aggression	.18	.04	.65
Total Parent Stress	.06	.13	1.60
Positive Parenting	.72	.78	11.35 ***
Parent Involvement	-.18	-.09	-1.73
Punishment	.07	.01	.11

Note. * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

Appendix A: IRB Approval Letter

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University of Central Florida Institutional Review Board
Office of Research & Commercialization
12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501
Orlando, Florida 32826-3246
Telephone: 407-823-2901 or 407-882-2276
www.research.ucf.edu/compliance/irb.html

Approval of Exempt Human Research

From: UCF Institutional Review Board #1
FWA00000351, IRB00001138

To: Kimberly D. Renk and Co-PI: Megan Hare

Date: March 10, 2014

Dear Researcher:

On 3/10/2014, the IRB approved the following activity as human participant research that is exempt from regulation:

Type of Review:	Exempt Determination
Project Title:	The Relationship of Parents' Work Stress and Child Functioning in the Context of Spillover Effects, Parenting and Marital Stress, and Parents' Perceptions
Investigator:	Kimberly D Renk
IRB Number:	SBE-14-10072
Funding Agency:	
Grant Title:	
Research ID:	N/A

This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made and there are questions about whether these changes affect the exempt status of the human research, please contact the IRB. When you have completed your research, please submit a Study Closure request in iRIS so that IRB records will be accurate.

In the conduct of this research, you are responsible to follow the requirements of the Investigator Manual.

On behalf of Sophia Dziegielewski, Ph.D., L.C.S.W., UCF IRB Chair, this letter is signed by:

Signature applied by Joanne Muratori on 03/10/2014 09:07:38 AM EST

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Joanne Muratori'.

IRB Coordinator

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